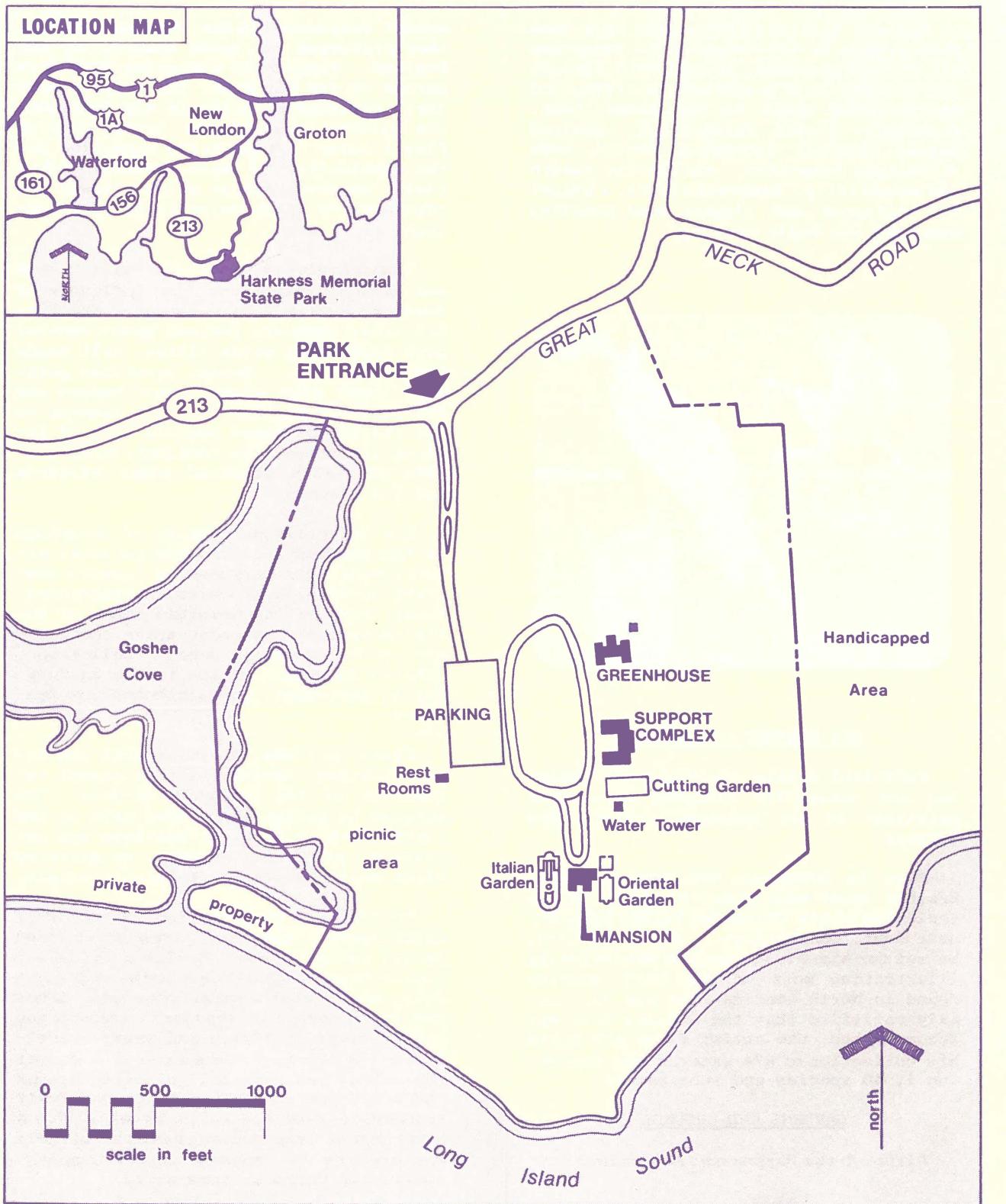


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HARKNESS MEMORIAL STATE PARK

CONCRETE HISTORY
JUN 08 '83
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT



THE HANDICAPPED

Deeply touched by the plight of children suffering the cruel handicaps of mind and body, Mary Harkness, in her Will, provided for the continuity of an on-going rehabilitation and recuperation program to be carried on by the State of Connecticut in her memory. Before her death in 1950, at the age of 76, Mary Stillman Harkness devised the entire estate to the people of Connecticut to be used in a manner beneficial to public health. Today, approximately half of the park area is reserved as an exclusive recreation site for Connecticut's handicapped.

Twenty-three overnight cottages housing over 200 handicapped individuals and their counsellors are currently in use.

SCHEDULE:

The grounds at Harkness Memorial State Park are open every day from 8 a.m. to sunset.

The buildings are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily Memorial Day through Labor Day at which time a parking fee is in effect.

Other activities:
Picnicking, fishing.

EOLIA
We made our landfall on Eolia Island
domain of Eolus Hippotades
the wind king, dear to the gods who never die . .
now those lords, in their parents' company,
sup every day in hall - a royal feast
... and all the night they sleep
on beds of filigree...

The Odyssey of Homer

State of Connecticut
Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Parks and Recreation
Hartford, Connecticut 06115

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HARKNESS MEMORIAL STATE PARK

Waterford, Connecticut

Near the confluence of the Thames River and Long Island Sound lies a rock-studded, breezy promontory - Goshen Point. Upon this picturesque and scenic piece of Connecticut's southern shore, the Edward S. Harkness Family built a large summer residence - Eolia.

Focal point of the 234-acre estate, the mansion, begun in 1902, by Mrs. William Taylor, late sister of Mrs. Harkness, is surrounded by woodland, open meadow and nearly a mile of natural beach and salt marsh.

Immediately following their marriage in 1904, the Harknesses assumed the property, gradually embellishing its elegance over a span of nearly half a century. Each summer, the great and near great visited Eolia to share with the owners a life style and hospitality accorded only the well-to-do.

HARKNESS PHILANTHROPIES

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1874, Edward S. Harkness was to become heir to a fortune initiated by his father's substantial investments in John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil. Instilled at an early age with an ardent love for his fellow man and a feeling of responsibility for the wise and just use of the vast wealth at his command, Mr. Harkness was to bestow over two-hundred-million dollars upon wide-ranging philanthropies.

Equally generous and deeply concerned about the less fortunate, Mrs. Harkness shared her husband's interests, and gave freely to such local organizations as the Lawrence Memorial Hospital, the Connecticut College for Women in New London, the Waterford Public Health and Nursing Service and the restoration of Mystic Seaport. Every lightship crew and tender in the United States was the grateful recipient of a new radio set during the 1930's. Sharing, rather than charity, was the spirit of her giving and she typically preferred to remain anonymous.



THE MANSION

Architecturally, the 42-room residence exhibits the Italian school of design. Unpretentious charm and simplicity characterize the visitor's first impression. Made of cement-limestone blocks formed on the site, the walls present a pleasing rough-textured effect incorporating finely screened pebbles of uniform color in the finished surface. Durable, glazed ceramic tiles retain a shingle effect on the sloped portions of the roof. Climbing actinidia vines cling to the masonry facade dis- guising its massive proportions.

THE ESTATE

The visitor to Harkness Memorial is consciously aware of numerous meadows, pasture lots, gardens and various support facilities required to operate the estate. An impressive structure northwest of the residence housed the stable, motor vehicles and farm machinery as well as several apartments for employees, a bowling alley, billiard room and squash court. Near the tennis court and cut flower gardens is a large water tower which played a part in the estate's self-sufficiency. A greenhouse, currently open to the public, provided seedling growing stock for extensive flower, vegetable and landscape gardens.

Today's visitor to Eolia must rely upon photographs of the interior to recapture its era of grandeur. Luxury amid classic surroundings best describes the living and entertaining areas of the summer home. Tastefully chosen furnishings, acquired during numerous excursions abroad, were strikingly beautiful, reflecting warmth and sensitivity. Teakwood floors, a graceful staircase and elegant wood paneling enhanced the basic setting.



REX BRASHER COLLECTION

Exhibited within the residence building are seasonally selected watercolor paintings of the renowned artist, Rex Brasher.

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1869, Brasher spent most of his 91 years in the seclusion of his Chickadee Valley property near Kent, Connecticut. Early in life, he set for himself the goal of meticulously illustrating most of the bird species found in North America. At age 51, finally satisfied that the arduous task was accomplished, the artist first exhibited his collection of 874 watercolors depicting 1,040 species and sub-species.

GARDENS AND GROUNDS

Although the Harknesses maintained per-

manent residences in New York and Florida, they preferred to spend summers in New England. Frequently wintering abroad in Europe or the Far East, the owners regularly returned to Eolia in mid-June when the gardens reached the spring peak of floral color. Especially appealing was the combination of warm sunshine and a cool, on-shore breeze which allowed the returnees to fully enjoy their surroundings.

Immediately west of the main house are gardens exhibiting the influence of Southern Mediterranean design - the formal axial symmetry focused upon a central pool containing water lilies, tall reeds and water iris. Broad, gravelled pathways lined with clipped yew hedges and 200-year-old English Boxwoods connect to the raised, U-shaped pergola made of Indiana limestone, its roof and fluted columns partially obscured under wisteria and fox grapes.

The selection and display of groupings in the gardens received the personal attention of Mrs. Harkness to assure a constant succession of color and fragrances. Today, many of the original roses of infinite variety and color grace the walls and trellises during June. Heliotrope, dahlias and regal lilies follow in July. During September, chrysanthemums are featured.

Floral perfume, charming urns and exotic statuary invite more than casual inspection of the Oriental gardens. The setting is unlike any other part of the estate with an aura of mystique and seclusion, provided, in part, by quarried block walls and plants of Asiatic origin.

An informal presentation of colorful wildflowers, timeless perennials, and ground covers, tucked beside a trickling alpine cascade characterize the rock gardens, where overhanging dogwoods, pines and cedar provide seasonal comfort for birds, frogs, goldfish and weary travelers. Sharp-eyed viewers will discover the unique and rare fall blooming crocus and a section of boxwood hedge carefully trimmed to form the initials M. S. H. A cryptomeria tree growing near the pergola was given by the Japanese people in appreciation of Harkness generosity.